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CHALLENGE OF THE UNIFIED EXTENSION PROGRAM

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DISTRIBUTION: One copy of this circular has been sent to each extension director and each agricultural college and experiment station library in all States; to each State and assistant State county agent leader, State and assistant State home demonstration leader, and State and assistant State club leader in West.

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CHALLENGE OF THE UNIFIED EXTENSION PROGRAM

Leadership in connection with any movement depends upon the correct analysis of the problems involved and the acceptance of the solutions offered by the majority of people concerned. The West is leading in the attempt to work out a sound regional farm and home policy and in devising ways and means to make that policy effective.

At the last annual meeting of the land-grant colleges at Chicago the association took what was considered one of the most important forward-looking steps that it had ever taken. This was the issuing of a report on the agricultural situation, in which was set forth the association's concept of what should be the future agricultural policy for the land-grant colleges. The content of this report and the action leading from it are interesting when compared with what happened at Fort Collins in 1925. The principal topics contained in the land-grant report related to agricultural surpluses, land policies, taxation, transportation, agricultural credit, immigration, tariff, and agricultural cooperation. In other words, the entire assumption was that the farmer was not in a position to help himself but needed these outside helps through legislation and other means. At Fort Collins the topics discussed and acted upon, in a regional way, related to what adjustments should take place in the range-livestock production in the West, in the dairy industry, and in the feeding of the farm people. Definite recommendations were worked out as to what the farmer and the extension service might do to improve the situation with reference to these enterprises. In addition, a definite extension program was set up to bring about these ends.

At Chicago there was a hint in the recommendations that some action should be taken. If we judge the report of the land-grant meetings as indicative of the general concept of the land-grant institutions of how progress in farming is to be made, compared with the general concept back of the Fort Collins meeting, we might consider that the Fort Collins and subsequent meetings were 20 years ahead in devising a regional agricultural and home policy. However, the Chicago meeting does indicate that the land-grant institutions as an organization are beginning to think the way the western people thought at the Fort Collins conference. If the West continues to lead in regional program planning it must continue to make progress in organizing its thinking and put its agricultural and home-making policy into actual farm and home practice.

The Western States Farm Problems

I would like to present some of the things that are happening in the West in order that we may get before us the significance of the Western States program and what it demands of our extension service. In the first place, the population on the Pacific coast is growing more rapidly than anywhere else in the country. If it continues its present rate of growth, in 50 years there will be between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 people in the 11 Western States. The Western States grow every crop grown elsewhere in the United States and many not grown elsewhere. In a greater part of the territory instead of agriculture being based upon the cultivated land, it is primarily dependent upon range

and pasture. Just to indicate what this growth in population might do, at the present time a greater portion of the range cattle go East either as feeders or butcher cattle. If in 50 years the population should grow as indicated above there would not be enough beef animals in the West to supply the needs of the population then living there. Western agriculture has not become stabilized to the extent that it has in the East and the Middle West. Standards of living have not become fixed, and the people have large ambitions and high ideals.

There are now about 30,000,000 acres in cultivated crops. If we take the average yield of feed crops from the present acreage devoted to this purpose and apply it to the feed obtained from uncultivated range and pasture, it would be the equivalent of between 30,000,000 and 35,000,000 acres, or an acreage greater than that now devoted to harvested crops. In the future the animals that are fed upon an open range will make the first demand upon whatever additional cultivated acres may be added to the farming areas. During the last 20 years the production of hay has increased from two-thirds to a whole ton per animal unit. To supply this increase between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 acres of new hay land are required.

As the population grows the demand for butcher stock increases. There was a time in the not distant past when practically all of the feeder beef from Nevada went to the Mississippi River markets. Now practically all of it is turned West to feed the people in the San Francisco and Los Angeles trade areas. Therefore, as the population increases, the West, instead of providing feeder cattle for the Middle West, will have the problem of producing feeder cattle to be fattened and slaughtered within its own area.

To-day there are over a million more beef cows than 25 years ago but three-quarters of a million fewer steers. The cattle from the range are going on the market at younger ages. A cow ranch needs more insurance in the form of feed reserves than a steer ranch. This will mean a greater demand for cultivated crops and a different system of ranch management. Some one will have to determine what areas are best adapted to different types of ranch beef production and what are the best systems in these areas.

Next to the production of bulky vegetables, the land around our large urban centers is used for the production of whole milk. In other words, this growth of population is going to mean a readjustment within the dairy industry as well as an expansion. Near-by dairy areas which are now producing butter and cheese will be turned to the production of whole milk and new areas developed at more distant points to provide the butter and cheese. To feed this increase in population will mean that the number of dairy cows will have to be more than doubled and the acreage of cultivated crops necessary to feed this increased animal population will be between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 acres. Out of this will grow the problem of feeding dairy cows near large urban centers upon imported feeds and the importation of dairy cows from other areas to keep up the constant flow of milk. In other areas the problem will come up of raising the cows to be imported to these near-by whole milk centers as well as for new and developing dairy regions. Manufacturing plants have to be established and quality of production standardized.

Extension workers will have to decide where these regions are to be and how fast they should be developed in order to determine the background of the future dairy program. In other words, dairying will probably have a larger amount of readjustments than any other one important enterprise in the 11 Western States and will have more to do with bringing about readjustments in other enterprises than any other factor. For example, the bringing in of a large number of dairy cows and milking them, through their profitable period, throws on to the market a large quantity of low-grade dairy meat animals. These in turn will compete with low-grade beef animals. The range-cattle industry will feel this competition and in order to compete will have to improve its quality or accept the price offered for this by-product of the dairy industry.

Another interesting feature of the range industry of the West has been the trend in sheep production. There are large areas where only sheep and goats can exist; yet in the greater part of the West and in spite of what appears to be a relatively high price obtained for sheep and wool, the number of sheep is decreasing. Sheep are pioneer animals and can be grown profitably at long distances from consuming centers. Therefore, even with the advantage of the tariff, sheep are not increasing to any large extent in the United States. There are a few areas in such States as California, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho, located favorably for lamb feeding, where the sheep industry is increasing. In the future at least a part of the range area now being used for the production of mutton and wool will be turned to the production of beef.

From the point of view of developing an agricultural policy for the West, the key to the situation will be the increase in population, its effect first upon the dairy industry, and second its effect, through the dairy industry, upon other types of farming and ranching.

Farm Home

Nowhere in the United States can be found as many ideal farm homes or as many homes as far from ideal, as can be found in many parts of the West. Probably in no area are there as many abandoned farm homes, due to unfavorable locations, adverse financial conditions, and poor judgement as to what might be obtained from the use of lands as in certain regions in the West.

In the West home making is in the making. In some regions the Government policy with reference to the sale of land has led directly to the establishment of unfavorable economic conditions. In other places the land policy of the local people and business men has led to the settlement and the establishment of types of agriculture wholly unsuited to the maintenance of an American farm standard of living.

With the wide variations in the types of agriculture and in enterprises, in ideals of people assembled from all parts of the United States, the establishment of a home policy is even more difficult than the establishment of an agricultural policy; but if the West can set up a few standards and sell to the great mass of people and get their favorable action upon them,

I believe that the West will again lead in its farm-home program. In a way it is being formulated at the present time.

The idea of \$1,200 cash for the expenses of the farm home seems to stick in the minds of the people and is not far from a good minimum standard. The idea of a five or six room house with three bedrooms is another ideal which seems to be growing. So far as I know, nowhere else in the United States has this concept been put into the extension program. The idea of a living wage has been accepted by the great labor organizations and apparently is one of the fundamental things behind the better living standards that the American laborer enjoys. If the farming people are to enjoy those things in life which are their due, they too will have to set their own living standards and develop a system of farming and home making that will provide these things. It will come to them only out of their own longings and effort.

To provide a \$1,200 income, a 40-acre irrigated farm has to begin with an overhead of \$30 an acre. If taxes, insurance, water charge, and interest are added to this living charge, there is an overhead charge before beginning to consider crops and livestock production cost of nearly \$50 an acre. There are but few crops that will give this gross return; yet there are innumerable farms with 40 acres or less of cropped land. In other instances they are farm families dependent upon the production of 10 or 12 milch cows. Here we have a living charge of \$100 per head. In many cases the solution of the farm-home problems remains in a readjustment in size and in the systems of farming.

Problems - Farmer and Home-Maker Replacement

A young man in the West starting farming under present conditions is up against a far different problem from that of the older man established in the same area, or farmers in established areas. In the first place, the club member in the future will have to consider whether he shall be a farmer at all, or if a farmer, what type of farming he is personally best qualified to follow. The young farmer has to decide how he will distribute his capital, how much of his earnings he will save, how much of his desire for additional necessities and luxuries he will deny himself in order to reduce his mortgage, and how large a business he can conduct with his present resources. With the present outlook for agricultural prices, land values, and crop and livestock readjustments, the young man looking forward to becoming a farm operator in the West faces a far more serious situation than his parents or grandparents.

Although he will have to use the same skill the best farmers did in the past in handling his crops and animals, he faces an entirely different economic outlook. Therefore the farm boy has to look forward to a future where he will have to use the best methods of production that can be learned from science and the experience of the leading farmers, and also to an agricultural situation to which the agricultural colleges have given very little attention and with which the present generation of farmers has had limited experience.

At an even earlier age than that at which the boy becomes a farm operator the girl club member enters upon married life. The first 10 or 15 years of married life present many important problems. It is during this

period that the home is established, the first accumulation of wealth is made, the children are born, and their early training, so important in their development, is given. The future of the girl club member requires not only that she know how to organize a garden, can its products, and serve them tastily, but also what is a proper diet for young and growing children. Not only must she be able to sew and dress herself becomingly, but she must also know how much money under the financial conditions accompanying the acquiring of a clear title to a farm she can afford to put into clothing.

It is during this period that most of the home furnishings and equipment are purchased, and not only cheapness but utility and appearance must be considered. In addition to being a mother and housekeeper, it may be necessary for her to contribute to the finances of the family by taking over some farm enterprise, such as poultry raising or dairying.

Not only does the program for our young people fail to give experience in the larger problems they are to meet later in life, but there is a gap of 5 to 10 years from the time the majority drop club work until they start farming and home making on their own account. A few States are attempting to fill in this period, but as yet we have not found a method of approach that can be used in a large way.

Extension Problems

Extension problems in connection with subject-matter content might be divided into three main classes: (1) The larger managerial problems such as are discussed at economic conferences, and the content of the activities of the farm-management demonstrators. (2) Those activities which assist the farmer in making the most profitable selection or choice under certain conditions; that is, what variety of wheat to plant, how many times to spray, whether to treat seed. (3) Those manipulative or manual operations that in many instances the members of the farm family need assistance with. Under this heading would be included such items as, how to treat seed potatoes, how to operate a spraying machine, how to mix spraying material, and how to build a chicken house.

These three classes of problems are common both to the farm and to the home. At present probably 90 per cent of the activities relate to the last two types of subject-matter problems; yet if we review what the farmer is doing and the kind of changes he is making in his farming, we will probably find more profit or greater losses in connection with solution of the problems coming within the scope of the first phase.

It is within the field of these larger managerial phases that most of the agricultural problems pointed out above fall. This does not mean that the present phases that are being emphasized should be neglected. However, we are giving minor emphasis to many major problems and vice versa.

In connection with problems of the home probably more emphasis is placed upon manipulative skill than in agricultural problems. The farm women are taught how to can and how to remodel clothing. Relatively less time is devoted to these large managerial phases of home making, such as budgeting funds,

setting up standards for housing, clothing, and food to meet various financial and physical conditions.

In boys' club work two predominating influences are (1) the desire of the boy to enjoy the benefits of his club efforts, and (2) the stimulus of competition for various club prizes awarded. Unfortunately these incentives do not lend themselves to training for the biggest problems that farmers of the future will have to face.

The girls' club work has more of the solutions to its future problems than the boys' club activities; yet the larger managerial phases are almost wholly neglected. Contrasting the agricultural problems with the extension solutions raises the question "Why our present extension program?"

Extension workers have larger and more successful leadership to-day than in the whole history of our agricultural institutions. Home making is becoming more thoroughly crystallized as each generation of farm people come and go. From an extension point of view the West is fortunate in that its agriculture and home-making ways have become less fixed than any other areas in the United States. The western extension worker has a more favorable chance of making changes and establishing high standards than other parts of the United States.

The 11 Western States regional conferences were not only steps forward in program planning but also revealed the weakness in our background of information. The reason for the past success in the work has been that the research workers found the solution for many problems involved crop varieties and methods of control of diseases and pests. If extension workers are to have the correct solution to farm and home problems mentioned above, the experiment station will have to continue to furnish the background of information. If the agricultural colleges knew as much about land values as they do about breeding of plants they could have helped the farmers avoid the loss of billions of dollars in the last 10 years. If they knew as much about the management of a farm as about the management of a cow or hen, they could eliminate one-third of our farmers and leave the two-thirds with a much larger opportunity to earn a satisfactory living. A beginning is being made in research to determine how the family reacts to physical and economic environment. There is need for many studies of this kind. We know practically nothing of the life history of the young farm family going through the process of becoming farm operators. If the extension worker in the West is to have real leadership among farming people it is this type of wisdom which will enable him to make his biggest contribution.

The challenge of the Western States program is: "Shall we let future extension programs be based upon expediency and the easy things to do; or shall we get the facts, organize them, and develop a farm and home policy that will demand the respect and following of the farming people?" I believe the Western extension workers are capable, not only of leading the rural thought in their own territory but of setting the pace for all the agricultural institutions in the United States. It will require the best judgment of all the forces of our agricultural institutions to determine the solutions and the highest skill of the extension service to present these solutions to the farming people in a convincing way. If the agricultural colleges of the West are to accept the leadership they are qualified to assume, it will mean that all the forces will have to pull together toward a common objective -- the highest type of farm living.

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